

Engineering Heritage Committee
Oral History Program

Ron Yates, AM. Aeronautical Engineer

RESTRICTION ON USE: None

Born at Paddington NSW, he attended Marist Brothers Darlinghurst and the University of Sydney, gaining a Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering Degree, followed by Postgraduate study in Aircraft Metal Fatigue at UCL.A 1953. During RAAF service as a Flying Officer from 1943 to 1946 he flight-tested the Mosquito and the Wackett Woomera and for Qantas while still in the RAAF he tested the Liberator, Lancastrian and Catalina before joining Qantas as Operations Manager in 1946. He recommended the Constellation and the Boeing 707, acted as Buyer's Representative in America at Lockheed and Boeing and flight tested first the Constellations and then the 707 before returning to Australia in 1957 as Project Manager for the introduction of the Boeing 707 world-wide.

From 1959 to 1963 he returned to America as Manager Technical Services, before his appointment as Director of Engineering Maintenance in 1971, when he developed the Qantas Jet Base and Catering Service at Mascot for the introduction of the Boeing 747 Jumbo jets. He also had a hand in the design modification of the Jumbos for Qantas and in the selection of the Boeing 767. He was appointed Deputy General Manager and Chief Operating Officer in 1976. Deputy Chief Executive in 1982 and Chief Executive in 1981, he retired in 1986.

In his retirement he set up and acted as Deputy Chair of the Federal Airports Corporation, became a Director of the Civil Aviation Authority and acted as technical Consultant to Qantas. He was recently elected Vice-President Australasia of the Executive Council of the International Federation of Airworthiness and is Chairman of The Preston Group, an airport management software company, and Tower Technology, a company known for document imaging systems. He is an Honorary Fellow of The Institution of Engineers, Australia.